CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A medical instrument and/or a hopper for holding at least one medical instrument,
characterized in that
the instrument and/or the hopper comprise(s) encodings which are variable in consideration of information of use concerning the instrument.

2. A medical instrument and/or a hopper according to claim 1,
characterized by
fixed encodings which are suited for identifying a particular instrument and/or a particular hopper.

3. A medical instrument and/or a hopper according to claim 2,
characterized in that
the encodings and/or fixed encodings are adapted to be stored in at least one transponder as data carrier element which is fixedly arranged at the instrument and/or at the hopper.

4. A medical instrument and/or a hopper according to claim 3,
characterized in that
the transponder is formed to be attachable to the medical instrument and/or detachable from the same.

5. A medical instrument and/or a hopper according to claim 3,
characterized in that

the transponder is provided at a periphery of the medical instrument.

6. A medical instrument (4i) and/or a hopper (1) according to claim 4,
characterized in that
the transponder (2) is adapted to be arranged adjacent to a step (45) of the medical instrument (4i).

7. A medical instrument (4i) and/or a hopper (1) according to claim 5,
characterized in that
the transponder (2) is adapted to be arranged adjacent to a step (45) of the medical instrument (4i).

8. A medical instrument (4i) and/or a hopper (1) according to claim 6,
characterized in that
the transponder (2) is held adjacent to the step (45) by a sleeve (40) attachable to the medical instrument.

9. A medical instrument (4i) and/or a hopper (1) according to claim 8,
characterized in that
the shaft (41) of the medical instrument (4i), the transponder (2) and the sleeve (40) have substantially the same outer diameter.

10. A medical instrument (4i) and/or a hopper (1) according to claim 1,
characterized in that
the information of use includes the position (3i) of the instrument (4i) at the hopper, an instrument-specific admissible accumulated load of the instrument, an accumulated partial load of the

instrument (4i) and/or the number of sterilizing cycles performed for the instrument taking especially the torque, the direction of rotation and the number of rotations into account.

11. A medical instrument and/or a hopper according to claim 1,
characterized in that
the instrument is a dental drill, preferably an endo-drill.

12. A medical instrument and/or a hopper according to claim 1,
characterized in that
the hopper is adapted to be covered by a cover which is preferably at least partly transparent and capable of being autoclaved.

13. A medical instrument and/or a hopper according to claim 3,
characterized in that
the hopper is adapted to be sterilized together with the transponder and the instrument, or the instrument is adapted to be sterilized together with the transponder, preferably by autoclaving.

14. A medical instrument and/or a hopper according to claim 1,
characterized in that,
at its holes, the hopper is provided with marks which are suited for assigning the position of the instrument to the hopper.

15. An apparatus for holding a medical instrument and/or a hopper (1) having at least one medical instrument,

characterized by

a means for identifying encodings of the instrument and/or of the hopper and for varying the encodings taking information of use concerning the instrument into account.

16. An apparatus according to claim 15,
characterized in that
the means is capable of identifying and/or establishing fixed encodings of the instrument or of the hopper which are suited for identifying a particular instrument and a particular hopper, respectively.

17. An apparatus according to claim 16,
characterized in that
the means is capable of identifying encodings and/or fixed encodings which are storable in at least one transponder fixedly arranged at the instrument or at the hopper as data carrier element.

18. An apparatus according to claim 15,
characterized in that
the information of use includes the position of the instrument at the hopper, an instrument-specific maximum load accumulation and/or a partial load accumulation of the instrument.

19. An apparatus according to claim 15, comprising a treatment device for controlling and driving the medical instrument,
characterized in that
the instrument is a dental drill, preferably an endo-drill.

20. An apparatus according to claim 19,
characterized in that
the apparatus is connected to or integrated in the treatment device for data transmission.

21. An apparatus according to claim 20,
characterized in that
the apparatus together with the treatment device is provided with a data transmission means for data transmission.

22. An apparatus according to claim 21,
characterized in that
the data transmission means performs a contact-less data transmission between two elements of the treatment device which are separable from each other.

23. An apparatus according to claim 21,
characterized in that
the data transmission means performs an inductive transmission of data.

24. An apparatus according to claim 22,
characterized in that
the data transmission means performs an inductive transmission of data.

25. An apparatus according to claim 22,
characterized in that
the data transmission means has an induction coil at each of the two elements which are separable from each other.

26. An apparatus according to claim 22,
characterized in that

the elements separable from each other of the treatment device comprise a handpiece and an elbow.

27. An apparatus according to claim 15,
characterized in that
the apparatus is arranged at the handpiece.

28. An apparatus according to claim 15, comprising a providing means for providing and selecting the hopper or medical instruments to equip the hopper,
characterized in that
the apparatus is connected to the providing apparatus for data transmission.

29. A system comprising a medical instrument and/or a hopper according to claim 1 and an apparatus according to claim 15.

30. A system according to claim 29, comprising an apparatus according to claim 28.